

## MINUTES

### NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

July 9, 2015

MSU Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health  
4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing, MI 48910

#### Present for the Natural Resources Commission

John Matonich, chair  
J.R. Richardson, vice-chair  
Vicki Pontz  
Rex Schlaybaugh  
Christine Crumbaugh  
Louise Klarr  
Tim Nichols

#### Present for DNR staff

Keith Creagh, DNR director  
Bill Moritz, DNR natural resources deputy  
Pam Stephenson, legal counsel, Office of the Attorney General  
Dennis Knapp, DNR chief of staff  
Cheryl Nelson, executive assistant to the NRC

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chairman John Matonich** called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 2:50 p.m.

**Director Creagh** introduced new employees **Mark Sweatman**, supervisor of Minerals Management, and **John Pepin** as Deputy Public Information Officer.

**Draft Water Strategy** **Jon Allan**, director of the Office of Great Lakes, briefed the commission on the draft water strategy that was recently released. The strategy provides a roadmap to achieve the 30-year vision to ensure Michigan's water resources support healthy ecosystems, citizens, communities and economies. The strategy was developed in collaboration with the departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

**Summary of EPA "Fracking" Report** **Adam Wygant**, of the DEQ reported to the commission on a recent Environmental Protection Agency Report on hydraulic fracturing in the United States. The report found no widespread systematic impacts on drinking water due to hydraulic fracturing. Michigan continues to be a leader in fracking regulations.

**Timber Harvesting** **Bill O'Neill/Russ Mason** spoke to the commission about forest management in the state. **O'Neill** added that the department will be harvesting an average of 61,000 acres per year for the next ten years. That number is based on a scientific assessment of sustainable forest. An estimated 27,000 acres of that land is clear cut. The remaining acreage is thinned or selectively harvested. He went on to explain that of the 27,000 clear cut acres, about 5,000 acres are replanted and the remainder is allowed to regenerate. This timber

management has benefits not just for a variety of tree species, but for wildlife species as well, including upland game birds and deer. This is why the Wildlife and Forest Resources divisions work so closely on timber management.

**Wildlife Health Update** Russ Mason/Steve Schmitt provided an update on several wildlife diseases, these included that there are no instances of Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease; no additional cases of Chronic Wasting Disease with over 200 deer tested and 1000 more samples are needed; avian influenza found in 12 geese, 10 goslings in Macomb County, they also tested 186 healthy geese, the virus is dissipating as getting into warmer weather, the goal is 765 puddle ducks, and they will also test hunter-harvested birds this fall. West Nile Virus was detected in Ingham County in three crows, and is a human health concern. Schmitt also provided an update on bovine TB noting the prevalence rate is 1%.

**Highlights of Leadership Summit of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers** Director Creagh provided some information on the recent Summit and added that Jon Allan and Tammy Newcomb were instrumental. There was a pledge by Ontario, Ohio and Michigan to reduce phosphorus inputs to the western waters of Lake Erie by 40 percent over the next ten years. They also pledged to develop a strategy to double maritime trade and to further protect the region from aquatic invasive species through a regional mutual aid agreement.

**Trail and Parks Update** Ron Olson reported on the soft opening of the Outdoor Adventure Center in Detroit for staff and families. July 16 is the dedication of the Center with the opening to the public on July 20. He also provided information on the Senior Fun Days, where 400-500 people participated. July 15 is Metro Youth Day on Belle Isle with an estimated 30,000 children participating. He also gave an update on Youth Day at the Capitol. The new trail coordinator will be announced within the next few days. Occupancy in state parks on July 4<sup>th</sup> was 95%.

**Field Operations Division Facilities Update** Dan Lord from Finance and Operations discussed how the department is managing facilities across the state for the benefit of employees and to provide high quality customer service to the public. He gave specific information on the upcoming moves for the Traverse City and Rose Lake Operation Service Centers.

**Legislative Report** Trevor VanDyke, Legislative and Legal Affairs Office director, provided a written report of legislation related to the department.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **NRC Marketing, Partnership, Youth and Outreach Advisory Committee**

Commissioner Nichols reported that the focus of today's meeting was partnerships and how we engage the youth in helping the department move forward. Ray Rustem provided an update on the recent YCC outing at the Kettunen Center. Nichols also extended his thanks to the outgoing YCC members asked how do we continue to keep them engaged. They heard from John Gray from Safari Club International and a teacher at Lake Orion schools in regard to the Nature Ventures Program, Bruce Ross from Ross & Associates regarding youth enrichment for urban youth and from Brandon Schroeder from 4H Great Lakes regarding the 4H Great Lakes Camp. Messages to them are who are we missing, how do we get other groups engaged. What can we do to help these other groups pull thoughts together, coordinate their

efforts and sharing resources, findings. **Nichols** also added that the YCC would like to meet on a more regular basis.

#### **NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries**

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** reported that the audience received an update from Wildlife, where it was noted that Wildlife received an award from MUCC as Conservation Organization of the Year. The committee received a report from **Barb Avers** on waterfowl with the good news that the populations seem to be stable. The committee also received a report from **Kristin Bissell** on Sharonville Pierce Road special hunt, which could be implemented through Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 7. They also received a detailed report from **Brian Frawley** on the 2014 deer harvest, and information from Ashley Autenrieth on recommendations for change; none are needed. **Dexter** gave an excellent update covering topics of Belle Isle, Harbor Beach, he also talked about Great Lakes aquaculture and issues associated with that.

**Partners in Conservation Award Dr. Chuck Nelson**, a professor at Michigan State University, received a Partners in Conservation Award for his career-long dedication to outdoor recreation.

**Partners in Conservation Award Dr. Norm Fred**, a retired dentist and chairman of the board and founder of Boardman River Clean Sweep, was honored with a Partners in Conservation Award for a long career of leading volunteer efforts to beautify the Boardman River area.

#### **PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

(**Dennis Knapp** read the official timekeeping procedures and guidelines for the meeting's public appearances which began at 4:43 p.m.)

**Amy Trotter**, MUCC, MUCC supports all regulations with Wildlife Conservation Order No. 9, CWD Response Measures. She commented that we need to try to make it as easy as possible for hunters to comply with the mandatory registration in the core area. Her other concern is that the department ensures that enhanced law enforcement activity in core area is there and focused on baiting and feeding aspect.

Regarding the discussion that was held in the Wildlife Committee regarding the special hunt in the Sharonville Unit, she would like to see an evaluation of program would like to see it forwarded to Blue Ribbon Panel of State Game Areas, this would be an important evaluation for them to look at.

**Trotter** also commented regarding looking at enhanced data mining opportunities to increase deer hunters, harvest, and satisfaction. She also added that the deer management plan needs to be implemented differently at regional levels.

**Jack VanRhee**, MUCC, addressed the commissioners to thank them and staff members who attended statewide MUCC convention a couple of weeks ago. He and MUCC appreciate their interest in how they develop the policies that they bring to the department.

**Chairman Matonich adjourned the public appearances portion of the meeting at 4:50 p.m. and called order to the regular meeting of the NRC at 4:51 p.m. He noted that all**

commissioners who were present, with the exception of Commissioner Crumbaugh, at the Committee of the Whole were present for the regular meeting.

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**Sharonville State Game Area Special Hunt, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 7 of 2015**

**Waterfowl and Other Migratory Bird Hunting Regulations for 2015-2016, Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 8 of 2015**

**Chronic Wasting Disease Response Measures for Deer in Clinton, Ingham, and Shiawassee Counties, Amendment No. 9**

**NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION ACTION ITEMS**

**Approval of Minutes, June 11, 2015, Natural Resources Commission meeting**

**Commissioner Nichols** made a motion that the minutes of the June 11, 2015 NRC meeting be approved. **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**Migratory Game Bird Early Seasons Regulations, Wildlife Conservation Order No. 6 of 2015**

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** moved that Wildlife Conservation Order Amendment No. 6 of 2015, Migratory Game Bird Early Season Regulations be adopted. **Commissioner Nichols** supported the motion. **Matonich** called for discussion, there being none, a vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

**DIRECTOR – FOR INFORMATION ONLY AND ACTION ITEMS**

**Director Creagh** listed the “for information only” items listed on the agenda.

**Director Creagh** then listed the “director’s action” items listed on the agenda and indicated he would approve all items.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**Commissioner Pontz** thanked commission for the kindness when she was ill and that the Portland tornado cleanup has been taking up her time.

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** has had a wonderful trout season, he met with the Huron Pines Executive Council to discuss some watershed issues in the Grayling/Gaylord area.

**Commissioner Richardson** enjoyed going to MUCC convention and the Ruffed Grouse dinner, noting the great partnership. He and the Timber Advisory Council are planning for Governor's

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timber summit in October. The commissioner thanked **Ron Olson** and staff for work on the trails in Upper Peninsula.

**Commissioner Nichols** commented about the work that was done on the ordinance by many to get the Red Cedar River through MSU open for fishing which sunsets this year, he urged the audience to contact trustees of the board to renew the ordinance so that it remains open for the foreseeable future.

**Director Creagh** provided an update on the June 22 USFWS finding that the petition to reclassify wolves as a threatened species failed to provide substantial information indicating these wolves may meet the definition of a threatened species, or specifically are likely to be in danger of extinction within all of a significant portion of their range. This notice was published in the July 1, 2015 Federal Register.

**Chairman Matonich** commented that he and **Commissioner Schlaybaugh** attended a cable restraint meeting with members of the houndsmen and trapping associations. He appreciates the work the department staff and everyone put into that. He adds that there will be some changes that will make a few more folks happy. He attended the MUCC convention. He also attended a pre-meeting at Lake Gogebic dealing with fisheries issues. There is significant reduction in tourism, and anything we can do to bring more tourism into the area would be welcome.

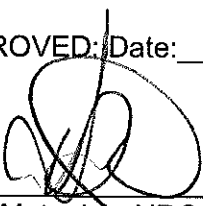
#### Next Meeting

**Chairman Matonich** announced that the next meeting of the NRC is scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2015 at Yarrow Golf & Conference Resort, 10499 North 48<sup>th</sup>, Augusta, Michigan. Committees meeting in August will be the NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee.

#### Adjournment

**Commissioner Schlaybaugh** made a motion to adjourn. **Commissioner Nichols** seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

APPROVED: Date: 8/13/15

  
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John Matonich, NRC Chairman

  
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Keith Creagh, DNR Director